

Choice Poems

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A COLLECTION

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CHOICE POEMS.

— BY —

BRYANT, HOLLAND, WHITTIER, LONGFELLOW, HOPKINS,
LOWELL, MILLER, TAYLOR, TORREY, VOORHEES,
SMITH, AULD, JORDAN, MAYHEW,
WEAVER, ANON.

Compiled by the Publisher.

ORRVILLE, OHIO.

H. A. MUMAW, Printer and Publisher.

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CHOICE POEMS.

OUR FELLOW-WORSHIPPERS.

By William Cullen Bryant.

Deem not that thou and I
Are here the only worshippers to-day,
Beneath this glorious sky,
Mid the soft airs that o'er the meadows play.
These airs, whose breathing stirs
The fresh grass, are our fellow-worshippers.

See, as they pass, they swing
The censers of a thousand flowers that bend
O'er the young herbs of spring,
And the sweet odors, like a prayer, ascend,
While, passing thence, the breeze
Wakes the grave anthem of the forest trees.

It is as when, of yore,
The Hebrew poet called the mountain steeps,
The forests, and the shore
Of ocean, and the mighty mid-sea deeps,
And stormy wind, to raise
A universal symphony of praise.

For lo, the hills around,
Gay in their early green, give silent thanks;
And, with a joyous sound,
The streamlet's huddling waters kiss their banks;
And, from its sunny nooks, [looks.
To heaven, with grateful smiles, the valley

The blossomed apple tree,
Among its flowery tufts on every spray,
Offers the wandering bee
A fragrant chapel for her matin lay,
And a soft bass is heard
From the quick pinions of the humming bird.

Haply—for who can tell—
Aerial beings, from the world unseen,
Haunting the sunny dell,
Or slowly floating o'er the flowery green,
May join our worship here
With harmonies too fine for mortal ear.

EUREKA.

By J. G. Holland.

Whom I crown with love is royal;
Matters not her blood or birth;
She is queen, and I am loyal
To the noblest of the earth.

Neither place, nor wealth, nor title,
Lacks the man my friendship owns;
His distinction, true and vital,
Shines supreme o'er crowns and thrones.

Where true love bestows its sweetness,
Where true friendship lays its hand,
Dwells all greatness, all completeness,
All the wealth of every land.

Man is greater than condition,
And where man himself bestows,
He begets, and gives position
To the gentlest that he knows.

Neither miracle nor fable
Is the water changed to wine;
Lords and ladies at my table
Prove Love's simplest fare divine.

And if these accept my duty,
If the loved my homage own,
I have won all worth and beauty;
I have found the magic stone.

LEGEND OF THE STARLIGHT.

By Mrs. E. P. Miller.

All over the floor of the blue,
There are holes where the nails have
 pierced through;
And they let the White Light
Of the glory at night,
Come dripping down soft, like a dew.

Now the Angels, above, ever stand,
To hold back with their glorified wand,
 The rich streams of pure light,
 That would palsy our sight,
If poured out with a prodigal hand.

There are floods of this glory above;—
Floods ever increasing by love;—
 For the love of His saints,
 Freed from sorrows and plaints,
Is borne up by the Heavenly Dove.

And there in the depths it is stored;
And thence upon mortals 't is poured,
 As He sees we have need;
 For He ever gives heed
To those children who wait on the Lord.

On these cords of ineffable light,
Slipping through from the glory at night,
 We may, hand over hand,
 Upward climb to the land,
From all sorrows of Earth out of sight.

Out of sight of the anguish and pain;
Out of sight of the filth and the stain;
 Out of sight of the grief
 That finds never relief
Save in clinging to Jesus amain.

There we'll drink of the glory our fill;
We will bathe in the heavenly rill;
 For the Lamb is the Light
 Of the Throne, and our right
Has been sealed by obeying His will.

BACKWARD GLANCES.

By Hiram Torrey.

To-night I turn to trace the years,
That lead me back to childhood's day;
Yet I but faintly see the way
With eyes made dim by falling tears!

As distant hills through autumn air,
Aglow in sunset's golden shine,
Do seem to touch the world divine,
And its transfigured glory share,

So time with memory's mellow light
Has hallowed all the past for me;
And through my horoscope I see,
Nor cloudy day nor stormy night!

O years, roll back that I may see
That moss-roofed house on meadow run,
With walls made brown by storm and sun,
Which then was all the world to me!

My heart cries out for that home band,
Its well beloved ones, severed wide!
O, some have crossed the darksome tide,
To far off shores of summer land!

Why come these dreams this pensive eve,
Of scenes long passed and vanished joy?
Sweet dreams, that daylight will destroy,
And leave my heart to sigh and grieve!

Could I but turn the backward way,
Unwind the slack'ning thread of time,
Restore the lost—youth's flowery prime—
My life would be one golden day!

SPRINGTIME.

By Mrs. M. J. Smith.

The roses are red on the bushes,
The lily bends low on its stem ;
And sprays of the sweet scented briar,
Are glittering with many a gem.
The sunbeams are hide-and-seek playing,
With leaves that so merrily swing ;
And under the branches are shadows,
That come and grow deeper with spring.

I sit by my window and listen
To the song that the bobolinks sing ;
And hold up my cheek for caresses,
The warm breath of summer doth bring.
I list to the musical humming,
The buzzing of numberless bees,
And wonder much whether they tire,
Or carry their burdens with ease.

To me there's new life in the breezes,
Whose breath bears the sweetest
perfume ;
I drink in the fragrance of blossoms,
The hawthorn and appletree's bloom.
I welcome the tiniest flow'ret,
That peeps from the green growing sod,
And join with glad nature in praising
An all-wise and bountiful God.

THE ENCHANTED ISLAND.

By B. F. Taylor.

A wonderful stream is the river Time
As it runs through the realm of tears,
With a faultless rythm, and a musical rhyme,
A broader sweep, and a surge sublime,
And blends with the ocean of years.

There's a magic isle up the river Time,
Where the softest of airs are playing;
There's a cloudless sky, and a tropical clime,
And a song as sweet as a vesper chime;
And the Junes with the roses are staying.

And the name of this isle is Long Ago;
And we bury our treasures there;
There are brows of beauty, and bosoms of snow;
There are heaps of dust, but we love them so!
There are trinkets, and tresses of hair.

There are fragments of song that nobody sings,
And part of an infant's prayer; [strings;
There's a lute unswept, and a harp without
There are broken vows and pieces of rings,
And the garments she used to wear.

There are hands that are waved when the fairy
shore

By the mirage is lifted in air ; [roar,
And we sometimes hear, through the turbulent
Sweet voices we heard in the days gone before,
When the wind down the river is fair.

Oh! remembered for aye be the blessed isle,
All the day of life, till night! [smile,
And when evening comes, with its beautiful
And our eyes are closing to slumber awhile,
May that "Greenwood" of soul be in sight.

TWILIGHT MUSINGS.

By Mrs. A. R. Voorhees.

I sit alone: the slender moon
Now the horizon slowly nears:
'Tis summer evening; very soon
Will earth be bathed in dewy tears;
On every flower the gentle dew
Will shed new sweetness, pure and true.

I sit and muse on scenes I love:
The home and friends no more I'll know;
Howe'er so blest my life may prove,
I'll bless the days of LONG AGO:

'T was then I loved—my one true heart
To LOVE responded, not to ART.

I know not where thou art to-night,
Thou whom my trusting soul loves well;
Where thou may'st be at morning light,
I may not surely hope to tell:
Where'er thou art my heart will be,
Faithful, Oh dearest one, to thee!

THE BUD THAT YOU GAVE ME.

By Kate Auld.

Amid all the cluster of beautiful flowers
That adorns my hair to-night,
There smiles a delicate, modest bud
With petals so purely white.
Its beauty is precious and dear to me;
I prize it more highly than wealth: [one,
'Tis the bud that you gave me, my own darling
A type of thy love in itself.

You plucked it lightly from where there
 bloomed
Many more, but few fairer than this;
You wore it awhile where 't was nearest your
 heart,
Which its petals might almost kiss.

Then you, while its beauty was still aglow,
Wove it tenderly into my hair;
And amid the bright blush of garlanded wreaths
While it lives 't will be still glowing there.

When it dies I shall press its dear leaves to
my heart
And kiss its pure petals so white,
And fold it away in some secret place,
And hide its lost beauty from sight:
But I'll love it as dearly when wilted as now.
Our affection will ever be
Uncoloured, unfading; our symbol of love,
The bud that you gave to me.

FOREST TREES.

By Mrs. E. P. Miller.

Have you seen the gray-brown budding
Of the trees in valleys low?
Have you watched it creeping, creeping,
Up the mountain soft and slow?
Weaving there a plush-like mantle,
Brownish, grayish, reddish green,
Changing, changing, daily, hourly,
Till it smiles in emerald sheen?

Have you watched the shades so varied,
From the graceful, lithe White-Birch,
Faint and tender, to the Balsam's
Evergreen, so dark and rich?
Have you seen the quaint mosaics
Gracing all the mountain-sides,
Where they, mingling, intertwining,
Sway like softest mid-air tides?

Have you seen the autumn frostings
Spread on all the leafage bright,
Frostings of the rarest colors,
Red and yellow, dark and light?
Have you seen the glory painted
On the mountain, valley, hill,
When the landscape all illumined,
Blazons forth His taste and skill?

Have you seen the foliage dropping,
Tender cling, as loath to leave
Mother-trees that taught them deftly,
All their warp and woof to weave?
Have you seen the leafless branches
Tossing wildly 'gainst the blue?
Have you seen the soft, gray beauty
Of their wintry garments' hue?

Have you thought the resurrection
Seen in Nature year by year,
Is a symbol of our rising
In a higher, holier sphere?—
Lead the buds then, now maturing,
To an Autumn rich and grand,
That their Winter be a passage
Through the gates to Glory-land.

THE SHIPS THAT NEVER SAILED.

By A. A. Hopkins.

How many wait and watch to see
Their ships come sailing in,
From dreary days and weary ways
Glad haven sure to win!
How many know the tender hope
That holds throughout the years,
That somehow soon a blessed boon
Shall bring them joy for tears!

Each soul that sometime wafted forth
Its argosies so dear,
Has treasures rare beyond compare
Forever sailing near.
There is no need shall not be met,
No want unsatisfied,
When glad'ning gales speed in their sails,
Across the waters wide!

But I—than such more needy yet—
I wait for good to be,
And dare not dream my joy supreme
Will some day come to me.
For though oft-times beside the bay
Its sailors I have hailed,
I may not wait the doubtful fate
Of ships that never sailed!

INTIMATIONS.

By J. G. Holland.

What glory then! What darkness now!
A glimpse, a thrill, and it is flown!
I reach, I grasp, but stand alone,
With empty arms and upward brow!

Ye may not see, O weary eyes!
The band of angels, swift and bright,
That pass, but cannot wake your sight,
Down trooping from the crowded skies.

O heavy ears! Ye may not hear
The strains that pass my conscious soul,
And seek, but find no earthly goal,
Far falling from another sphere.

Ah! soul of mine! Ah! soul of mine!

Thy sluggish senses are but bars
That stand between thee and the stars,
And shut thee from the world divine.

For something sweeter far than sound,
And something finer than the light
Comes through the discord and the night
And penetrates, or wraps thee round.

Nay, God is here, couldst thou but see;
All things of beauty are of Him;
And heaven, that holds the cherubim,
As lovingly embraces thee!

If thou hast apprehended well
The tender glory of a flower,
Which moved thee, by some subtle power
Whose source and sway thou couldst not tell;

If thou hast kindled to the sweep
Of stormy clouds across the sky,
Or gazed with tranced and tearful eye,
And swelling breast, upon the deep;

If thou hast felt the throb and thrill
Of early day and happy birds, [words
While peace, that drowned thy chosen
Has flowed from thee in glad good-will,

Then hast thou drunk the heavenly dew :
Then have thy feet in rapture trod
The pathway of a thought of God ;
And death can show thee nothing new.

For heaven and beauty are the same,—
Of God the all-informing thought,
To sweet, supreme expression wrought.
And syllabled by sound and flame.

The light that beams from childhood's eyes,
The charm that dwells in summer woods,
The holy influence that broods
O'er all things under twilight skies,—

The music of the simple notes
That rise from happy human homes,
The joy in life of all that roams
Upon the earth, and all that floats,

Proclaim that heaven's sweet providence
Enwraps the homely earth in whole,
And finds the secret of the soul
Through channels subtler than the sense.

O soul of mine! Throw wide thy door,
And cleanse thy paths from doubt and sin ;
And the bright flood shall enter in
And give thee heaven forevermore!

LIFE'S WORK.

By Anon.

All around us, fair with flowers,
Fields of beauty sleeping lie;
All around us clarion voices
Call to duty stern and high.

Thankfully we will rejoice in
All the beauty God has given;
But beware it does not win us
From the work ordained of Heaven.

Following every voice of mercy,
With a trusting, loving heart,
Let us in life's earnest labor
Still be sure to do our part.

Now, to-day, and not to-morrow,
Let us work with all our might,
Lest the wretched faint and perish
In the coming stormy night.

Now, to-day, and not to-morrow,
Lest before to-morrow's sun
We, too, mournfully departing,
Shall have left our work undone.

THE GLADNESS OF NATURE.

By William Cullen Bryant.

Is this a time to be cloudy and sad,
When our mother Nature laughs around;
When even the deep blue heavens look glad,
And gladness breathes from the blossoming
ground?

There are notes of joy from the hang-bird and
wren,
And the gossip of swallows through all the
sky;
The ground-squirrel gayly chirps by his den,
And the wilding bee hums merrily by.

The clouds are at play in the azure space,
And their shadows at play on the bright
green vale,
And here they stretch to the frolic chase,
And there they roll on the easy gale.

There's a dance of leaves in that aspen bower,
There's a titter of winds in that beechen tree,
There's a smile on the fruit, and a smile on the
flower,
And a laugh from the brook that runs to the
sea.

And loook at the broad-faced sun, how he smiles
On the dewy earth that smiles in his ray,
On the leaping waters and gay young isles ;
Ay, look, and he'll smile thy gloom away.

[From "Studies in Bryant."]

WEARINESS.

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Oh, little feet ! that such long years
Must wander on through hopes and fears ;
Must ache and bleed beneath your load ;
I nearer to the wayside inn,
Where toil shall cease and rest begin,
Am weary, thinking of your road.

Oh, little hands ! that, weak or strong,
Have still to serve, or rule so long,
Have still so long to give or ask,—
I, who so much with book and pen,
Have toiled among my fellow-men,
Am weary, thinking of your task.

Oh, little hearts ! that throb and beat
With such impatient, feverish heat,
Such limitless and strong desires ;
Mine, that so long has glowed and burned
With passions into ashes turned,
Now covers and conceals its fires.

Oh, little souls! as pure and white,
And crystalline as rays of light
Direct from heaven, their source divine;
Refracted through the mists of years,
How red my setting sun appears!
How lurid looks this soul of mine!

[From "Chimes for Childhood."]

THE CLEAR VISION.

By John G. Whittier.

I did but dream. I never knew
What charms our sternest season wore.
Was never yet the sky so blue,
Was never earth so white before.
Till now I never saw the glow
Of sunset on yon hills of snow,
And never learned the bough's designs
Of beauty in its leafless lines.

Did ever such a morning break
As that my eastern windows see?
Did ever such a moonlight take
Weird photographs of shrub and tree?
Rang ever bells so wild and fleet
The music of the winter street?
Was ever yet a sound by half
So merry as yon school-boy's laugh?

Oh Earth! with gladness overfraught,
No added charm thy face hath found;
Within my heart the change is wrought.
My footsteps make enchanted ground.
From couch of pain and curtained room
Forth to thy light and air I come,
To find in all that meets my eyes
The freshness of a glad surprise.

Fair seem these winter days, and soon
Shall blow the warm west winds of spring
To set the unbound rills in tune,
And hither urge the bluebird's wing.
The vales shall laugh in flowers, the woods
Grow misty green with leafing buds,
And violets and wind-flowers sway
Against the throbbing heart of May.

Break forth, my lips, in praise, and own
The wiser love severely kind;
Since, richer for its chastening grown,
I see, whereas I once was blind.
The world, O Father! hath not wronged
With loss the life by thee prolonged;
But still, with every added year,
More beautiful thy works appear!

As thou hast made thy world without,
Make thou more fair my world within;
Shine through its lingering clouds of doubt;
Rebuke its haunting shapes of sin:

Fill, brief or long, my granted span
Of life with love to thee and man;
Strike when thou wilt the hour of rest,
But let my last days be my best!

[From "Among the Hills,"]

LONGING.

By James Russell Lowell.

Of all the myriad moods of mind,
That through the soul come thronging,
Which one was e'er so dear, so kind,
So beautiful as Longing?

The thing we long for, THAT we are,
For one transcendent moment,
Before the present, poor and bare,
Can make its sneering comment.

Still, through our paltry stir and strife,
Glow down the wished Ideal,
And Longing moulds in clay what Life
Carves in the marble Real;

To let new life in, we know,
Desire must ope the portal;—
Perhaps the Longing to be so
Helps make the soul immortal.

Longing is God's fresh heavenward will,
With our poor earthward striving;
We quench it that we may be still,
Content with only living.

But would we learn that heart's full scope
Which we are hourly wronging,
Our lives must climb from hope to hope,
And realize our Longing.

Ah! let us hope that to our praise
Good God not only reckons
The moments when we tread his ways,
But when the spirit beckons,—

That some slight good is also wrought
Beyond self-satisfaction,
When we are simply good in thought,
Howe'er we fail in action.

[From "Chimes for Childhood,"]

THE LOVED OF LONG AGO.

By Nellie V. Mayhew.

In the fire-light's flickering glow,
How the visions come and go,
Of the loved of long ago!

How our lonely hearts still yearn,
And our aching heads do burn,
As our thoughts toward them turn!

When night's shades begin to fall,
How the shadows on the wall
Bring the forms of one and all!

Then will mem'ry backward roam,
To our childhood's joyous home,
Ere the dread destroyer come.

Oh! the splendor to behold,
Gathered in the fire-light's gold,
All its beauties can't be told.

Fire-light flicker, dance, and fall,
Casting shadows, great and small,
Framing pictures on the wall,—

While within thy ruddy glow,
Visions come and visions go,
Of the loved of long ago.

THE STAR DIVINE.

By A. A. Hopkins.

I sit beside my window here,
And through the winter atmosphere
I see the hills of evening rise
Against the fading sunset skies.

As one by one the stars outshine,
I think how in this heart of mine
When darkness comes, through fear
and doubt,
The star of love shines clearly out.

It brighter still and brighter glows,
As deeper night my being knows,
And looking steadfast on its ray
I half forget the vanished day.

O star of Love divine, so blest,
Shine on forever in my breast,
That never night may come to me
So dark I can no comfort see !

The clouds are often o'er my way
So dense I walk in twilight gray,
But in thy light, O star divine !
I see my Master's face outshine !

And seeing this, I walk along,
Upon my lips a grateful song !
Within my heart a silent prayer
That God will make all shadows fair.

Then Faith contends He ever will,
And Faith recites with tender thrill
That for a moment dims my sight—
“At evening-time let there be light !”

[From “Asleep in the Sanctum.”]

HOME TO THE VILLAGE.

By D. M. Jordan.

So you have been to the village
And the homestead over the hill,
And walked once more down the shady road
That leads to the old grist mill ?
What of the old log school house,
With its benches narrow and hard,
The desks where we used to carve our names,
And the trees that shaded the yard ?

The homestead roof is mossy and gray,
Its rooms empty and still ;
The weeds are trailing over the walks,
And mildew darkens the sill.
The dear old road up the river
Is tracked by the iron rail,
And the shadows under the maples
Have fled as a swift told tale ;
The school house, ragged and roofless,
Stands where it did of yore,
But the dancing feet of the children
Waken the echoes no more.

Alas for the dear old school house !
But where are the boys and girls ?
With their merry pranks and laughter,
Their songs and their sunny curls ?

Is the old shop door still open,
Does the anvil chorus ring
To the strokes of the sturdy blacksmith
And the songs he used to sing ?
And the quiet spot on the hillside,
Where the sweet blush roses grow ;
Did you look on the shining marbles
For the names that we used to know ?

Where are the boys and girls ? Ah, me !
I talked with a gray-haired man,
Never guessing until he told,
That he was the merry Dan
Who locked the master out in the cold
And made him treat the crowd ;
Who stood up longest at spelling school,
And looked so handsome and proud.
There's a grand new school house on the spot
Where the anvil used to sound,
And the arm that wielded the heavy sledge
Is resting under the ground.

I walked where the western sunbeams
Touched with their fingers of gold
The names on the mossy marbles
That we loved in the days of old.
And the purple shadows of evening
Tell on the day and my tears
As I wept for the vanished faces
That I knew in the by-gone years ;

They are gone, and their names are fading :
They are scattered far and near ;
Some have carved on the scroll of fame
The names that were first carved here :
But oft in the din and jostle
There cometh a vision still
Of the beautiful vanished summers
And the school house over the hill.

LIFE NOT ALL A DREAM.

By M. Weaver.

How oft it seems that life's a dream
As hopes delayed
Our way have stayed
Which former years had made to gleam
With pearls, and gold from richest stream,
And longed to go from youthhood so,
When life's a dream,
We well may deem ;
When cares and sorrow it can scarcely know,
And fancies future's store to brighter glow
Than present e'er may seem !

But age reveals a sterner fact :
With labor thrive,
And nobly strive,
That whatsoever part we act
The good with life be all intact :

That life may bear some blessing rare
 To hearts astray
 From wisdom's way ;
That coming generations nobly dare [share
To tread the rugged paths we've trod, and
 The good we do to-day.

REMINISCENCES.

By Mrs. E. P. Miller.

“Evening at Home” suggests, so sweet,
A quiet sitting by the fire
After the evening board is cleared ;—
The lamps, or in the humbler homes,
Far back from cities' sights and sounds,
The candles lit ; the boys and girls,
With father, mother, and mayhap
The old grandsire and dame, ranged round
As best their taste or comfort suits.
Old pussy purrs 'twixt Rover's paws,
The wise old dog, whose blinking eyes
Turn knowingly this way or that,
As erewhile one or 'nother speaks ;—
And whose quick ear is all attuned
To catch the first, remotest sound
Of friendly foot ; and at the tread
Of thief or foe, so stealthy, sly, '—
His tones, in furious notes, and loud,
Leap out, and eyeballs start with flame !

The flickering firelight flashes dim,
Weird lights and shadows o'er the walls.
And paints such wondrous pictures there;
While those that hang, are softened now,
Now made more bright and clear withal;—
And chair and lounge and "settle," old,
Are shadowed here and there, and seem
Like things of life,—e'en as they are
To those who've known and loved them long.
And early childhood's memory brings
The old deal table, well-scoured floor,
And long-gear'd clock, that's told the hour
Of births and deaths and marriages,
A century past, and may be more.
The old "beaufet," with corner shelves,
And great blue platters standing guard
O'er crockery of lesser boot,
As o'er the thousand and one things
Which, in these later days, and new,
The closet and the pantry hide:
The pumpkin drying on the "pole:"
The baby's only flannel gown,
Washed out since he has gone to sleep,
And hung before the fire to dry.
Our mother, by the "light-stand," cuts
The apples for the morrow's pies;
And grandma knits, while grandpa naps:
And father with his paper reads,
Or now or then, aloud, at which
The children hush their merry talk,
And slyly carry on their games

Without disturbing look or sound :
The bed-room door stands quite ajar,
So's not to shut the baby out,
As also to let in the warmth.
All this I see, and how much more
I scarce can tell,—but ah, so much
That children now know nothing of,
Nor can they ever know ; for times
Are changed,—turned topsy-turvy quite.—
I see on evenings just before
Thanksgiving, Christmas, 'Lection days,
The great brick oven which all day long
Has held alternate heats and bakes,
Now roaring with its latest fill
Of blazing faggots, which, removed,
Give place to last and choicest batch
Of goodies for the coming "fete."
The children dance around in glee,
And offer little hindering helps,
Which mother, tired, refuses oft ;
And this, to them, strange wonder brings,—
For ah, the weariness she knows,
They can not feel, nor comprehend.

On other evenings, in the Fall,
I see the seven-pail kettle hang
Upon the "crane," 'bove gentle fire ;
Within, a seething, boiling mass
Of pared and quartered apples, rolls,
In "boiled-down cider," raging round.
And as they soften, mother skims

Them gently out, and puts in more;—
And this till late into the night,—
Till the big barrel, iron-bound,
Is brimmed with “cider apple-sauce,”
Which, all the winter through, 's so good,

And thus I might go on and tell
How sausages were made, and linked;
How apples cut and stringed to dry;
How the old spinning-wheel warmed up
By standing all day long beside
The fire, would whizz and whirr, while we
Would wonder how the yarn was made
So smooth and fine; how so drawn out;
How wound so deft on spindle bright;
And O, the graceful tripping turns
Of mother's small and shapely feet,
And motions of her comely hands,
Are pictured now, more vividly,
And more delightfully than aye
A waltzer's step or belle's choice wave!
Ah, these were gala days for us!
But then, for her who loved us so,
Poor, patient mother dear,—how we,
Her tender love, must oft have tried!

In contrast with my memories,
Comes up the thought of what will be
The memories of many a score
Of city bairns, when they to man-
And-womanhood have grown: for them

My look sees cooped-up tenements
With one room windowed, yes, and one,
Mayhap two, more, into the which
God's light and air can never come ;
A huddled, and—it must be so—
An impure life ; no elbow-room
In which to let off childish dash.
And thus fresh, youthful vigor, grow ;
No garret, wide, to romp and, ay,
To royster in ; no nice mud-pies
To make, on broken china bits ;
No sand-bank ovens to be built ;
No ducklings, goslings, chicks, in Spring ;
No trees to climb, no berries, pick ;
No orchards full of luscious fruit ;
No sucking cider through a straw ;
No slides down hill, nor drawings up
Of sled, with panting breath and cheeks
Aglow, that make such muscles fine
And store of life, as children here,
In pent-up town, can ne'er attain.

But ah, you see I'm telling what
They'll not remember ;—'cause, forsooth,
'Tis dearer, far, than what they will.—
For they'll remember many a fall
Both up and down the long, dark stairs ;
The filthy streets, the quarrels, strife ;
The rags and tatters ; smells, so foul ;
The hide-and-seek in alleys dim,—

For children all, must have some play :—
The scarlet, typhus, measles, mumps,
Small-pox, and health-inspectors, dread.
While, in the higher walks of life
The memories of these city bairns
Must teem with warnings, frequent, sore.—
“Don’t soil, or tear, your garments, gay!”
“Don’t mar the furniture, so fine!”
“Do not on the piano drum;”
“And don’t, I pray you, make a noise,
For mam’a’s sick, and must have rest!”
“Don’t ope the blinds; nor tease to go
Outside;”—in short, a score of NOTS
So knotty all, that none need think
It strange that children naughty grow.
Nor that their after-lives are far
From what God meant our lives to be.
And farther on, come hours so late,
And suppers, parties, theatres,
Wines, dresses, beaux and belles, and such
Unnervings and excitements, vile,
As form foundation, sure and soon,
For suffering, disease, and death
Of all that’s good and pure and high,
In body, mind, and soul, as well.

’Tis true, there bright exceptions are,
To pictures such as these I paint;
Yet falseness lurks in city life,
And stealthy creeps, or more or less,
Far back in towns and villages.

Till hamlets even are slimed o'er
With want of real and natural ways ;—
Which should, by all, be much deplored.
Ah, me, how oft my o'er-wrought heart
Goes out in gratitude to God,
That my dear, precious childhood home
Was in the country, fresh and pure ;
That there, no foul, false views of life
With wily pitfalls, flower-entwined,
Were e'er allowed to enter in.
But, that the False prevails, so then
Should earnest lovers of the Truth,
Seek to present it, plain and clear,
To who may live this folly life
Of fashion, frailty, ignorance,
Of error, wretchedness, and sin.
Such be my task : so grant this lay
And I'll no more ; but to the work
I love, will hie in times to come.

* [From " Evening at Home."]

A WOOD-NOTE.

Come ye, come ye, to the green, green wood:
Loudly the blackbird is singing:
The squirrel is feasting on blossom and bud,
And the curling fern is springing:
Here ye may sleep,
In the moss so deep.
While the noon is so warm and so weary,
And sweetly awake,
As the sun through the brake
Bids the robin and white-throat sing cheery.

The quicken is tufted with blossoms of snow,
And is throwing its perfume around it;
The wryneck replies to the cuckoo's halloo,
For joy that again she has found it:
The jay's red breast
Peeps over the nest.
In the midst of the crab-blossoms blushing:
And the call of the pheasant
Is frequent and pleasant
When all other calls are hushing.

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